

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**Statement by**

**Eugene Hickok  
Acting Deputy Secretary of Education**

**on**

**Teaching Programs and the President's Fiscal Year 2005 Budget Request**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today on the importance of teaching in the context of the President's 2005 budget request for education. Improving the quality of instruction, and more specifically putting a highly qualified teacher in every classroom, may well be the key to the success of the No Child Left Behind Act. That makes teaching a core concern for this Administration, as I know it is for the Chairman of this Subcommittee.

The reason is simple. Research shows what most of us know from personal experience: a talented teacher has a tremendous impact on student achievement. In particular, we know that a combination of teaching experience and strong content knowledge are linked to gains in student achievement. Indeed, the difference between a good teacher and a bad teacher can be as much as one grade level in academic achievement.

We also know that inexperienced or unqualified teachers tend to be concentrated in the high-poverty schools that face the greatest challenges in helping all students reach high State standards. And finally, we know that teaching is a tough job, because nearly one-quarter of all new teachers leave the profession during their first three years of service.

## **WHAT THE LAW REQUIRES**

The highly qualified teacher requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act were designed to address each of these issues in teaching. NCLB requires a good teacher in every classroom, so that all kids have the opportunity to achieve at grade. States must report on the percentage of classes not taught by highly qualified teachers, both overall and disaggregated by high-poverty and low-poverty schools, so that we know whether or not the students with the greatest needs are getting teachers who can meet those needs. And we believe that highly qualified teachers are likely to remain in the profession longer than those who are unprepared for the challenges of teaching.

The specific definition of a highly qualified teacher is a State-level issue, but No Child Left Behind generally requires that every teacher hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree, obtain full State certification or licensure, and demonstrate subject matter competency in each of the academic subjects taught.

All new teachers hired to work in Title I schools must meet these requirements, and all other teachers must be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. This is one reason Secretary Paige has stated that the 2005 budget is a critical one, as 2005 funds will support activities carried out in the 2005-2006 school year, when all teachers must be highly qualified and all States must implement the new assessments required by No Child Left Behind.

## **WHERE STATES CURRENTLY STAND**

Last fall States submitted data for the first time on the numbers and percentages of their teachers who are highly qualified. As is often the case with something that is new, the data provided had a few holes. Some States made a good faith effort and submitted reasonably accurate information. Some States were still working on their definitions of highly qualified teachers, and their data reflected that uncertainty. And some States simply did not submit any data on highly qualified teachers, in part because of limitations in their current data-collection systems.

Nevertheless, on the whole the 2003 State data on highly qualified teachers suggest how far we have to go to comply with No Child Left Behind. Some States appear to be in good shape, with 90 percent or more of their teachers already considered highly qualified. Other States face a much bigger challenge, with as few as half of their teachers meeting the highly qualified standard. Moreover, even some of the States reporting high percentages of highly qualified teachers may not have been using a definition that meets statutory requirements.

I think it is important to recognize that last fall's data served as a "wake-up" call for everyone involved, both at the State and local levels and here in Washington as well. There is a lot of work to be done over the next two years.

## **ED'S TEACHER ASSISTANCE CORPS**

Secretary Paige recognized this challenge even before the States submitted their initial data on teacher qualifications. Last summer he announced that the Department would create a

Teacher Assistance Corps (TAC) to support State efforts to meet the highly qualified teacher requirements.

The Teacher Assistance Corps includes 45 teachers, former teachers, principals, superintendents, leaders from higher education, State officials, and national experts from around the country. Following training and assignment to teams that included Department staff, the Corps began visiting States in September 2003. During visits Team members explained the highly qualified teacher requirements and answered policy questions. Just as important, the visits provided an opportunity to listen and learn, with TAC teams hearing about innovative State and local professional development initiatives as well as unique local conditions affecting the recruitment and training of highly qualified teachers.

Teacher Assistance Corps teams have visited 49 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. A visit to the 50<sup>th</sup> State is scheduled for April, and the Corps will continue to provide assistance through follow-up visits, conference calls, and regional and national meetings.

### **NEW FLEXIBILITY FOR STATES AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

A common set of concerns emerged from the Teacher Assistance Corps visits. For example, rural districts employ many teachers who are assigned multiple subjects, and thus face the challenge of meeting the highly qualified teacher requirements for each subject. Many middle school teachers have elementary or secondary certification, but lack specific middle school qualifications. And States continue to face shortages in key subject areas like special education and science.

To help States and school districts meet these and other challenges in complying with the highly qualified teacher requirements of No Child Left Behind, on March 15 the Secretary issued new guidance that both clarified existing flexibility and provided additional flexibility to meet these requirements.

One key change affects the nearly 5,000 districts that are defined as small and rural under Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Such districts would be allowed to provisionally employ middle or secondary school teachers to teach multiple subjects even if they do not meet all the criteria for a highly qualified teacher in each of the subjects they teach. Districts would be eligible for this flexibility as long as they are providing intensive supervision and professional development that will enable these teachers to become highly qualified in the additional subjects over a three-year period.

The new guidance also changed current Department guidance regarding qualifications for science teachers. States now have the flexibility to require science teachers to demonstrate subject matter competence either in specific scientific fields or in general science, depending on State certification or licensure requirements.

The Department also clarified that since States have the authority to define grade spans, they may determine the highly qualified teacher requirements that teachers must meet at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Other areas covered by the new guidance include the use of a High, Objective, Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) for veteran teachers, requirements for special education teachers, and improved data collection and monitoring procedures.

## **TWO PRINCIPLES FOR MEETING HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHER REQUIREMENTS**

In addition to the Teacher Assistance Corps and more flexible guidance, the Department is promoting two key principles to help States and school districts meet the highly qualified teacher requirements. First, we must raise academic standards for teachers. This is an explicit requirement of the law, which reflects research findings on the critical importance of subject matter knowledge for effective teaching. One way to raise standards is to improve traditional teacher preparation programs so that they serve as a more reliable source of highly qualified and well-prepared new teachers.

For example, the UTeach program at the University of Texas at Austin brought together the College of Natural Sciences and the College of Education in a collaborative effort to produce more secondary school teachers certified in math and science. UTeach eliminated generic education courses and instead closely linked streamlined education coursework to subject-matter offerings in the College of Natural Sciences. Students now graduate in four years with a bachelor's degree in math or science as well as certification to teach those subjects.

Second, we must lower the barriers that keep many talented people from entering the teaching profession. The law is silent on certification requirements, opening the door to new thinking at the State level about certification systems. In particular, States can streamline the process and create alternative routes that will encourage talented, qualified individuals to become teachers.

More than 40 States already have alternative routes to certification, and there are national efforts underway as well, such as the "Passport Certification" created by the Department-funded

American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence. The Board's goal is to create a certificate that is recognized in all 50 States.

Another example of innovative flexibility is the Adjunct Teacher Corps initiative included in our 2005 budget request. This \$40 million proposal would help create arrangements for utilizing well-qualified individuals from business, technology, industry, and other areas as teachers in secondary schools on an adjunct basis.

### **THE 2005 BUDGET REQUEST FOR TEACHING**

The President's 2005 budget request, like his earlier budgets, would provide very significant support for State and local efforts to ensure that all teachers are highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year.

The two key Federal programs that provide flexible resources for teacher training are Title II Improving Teacher Quality State Grants and the Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies program.

The request includes more than \$2.9 billion for Improving Teacher Quality State Grants. Since No Child Left Behind was signed into law, President Bush and the Congress have provided \$8.7 billion for this program, which delivers 95 percent of its funding to local school districts to pay for high-quality professional development activities. With the 2005 request, States would receive a four-year total of \$11.6 billion in Title II State Grant funds to meet the highly qualified teacher requirement of No Child Left Behind.

School districts also are required to use at least 5 percent of their Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies funds for professional development aimed at helping all teachers in Title I schools become highly qualified. President Bush is asking for a \$1 billion increase in Title I for 2005, for a four-year increase of \$4.6 billion, or 52 percent. The share of Title I funds reserved for meeting highly qualified teacher goals would reach nearly \$654 million under the President's request, for a four-year total of \$2.3 billion.

One key initiative for 2005 is the Secondary Education Mathematics proposal, which would provide \$120 million to help ensure that secondary-school math teachers are highly qualified and better prepared to meet the needs of struggling students.

Combined with smaller categorical programs that support professional development, along with benefits for individual teachers under Loan Forgiveness and tax provisions, the request would provide a total of more than \$5 billion to help States and school districts improve the quality of their teaching forces.

## **CONCLUSION**

As I said at the outset of my testimony, meeting the highly qualified teacher requirements of No Child Left Behind will be central to the success of the new law. I believe the law has already accomplished a great deal simply by focusing so much attention on the importance of putting a qualified teacher in every classroom. As is the case with implementing the rest of No Child Left Behind, the Department is working in partnership with States and school districts—both through guidance and technical assistance and through the significant financial support



made available by this Subcommittee—to move from requirement to reality in ensuring that all teachers are highly qualified.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
**Biographical Sketch**

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2003-Present      Acting Deputy Secretary  
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1995-2001          Secretary of Education  
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1994-1995          Director  
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1990-1995          Professor of Political Science  
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